

Community Fact Sheet

Old Yuma Mine Site

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

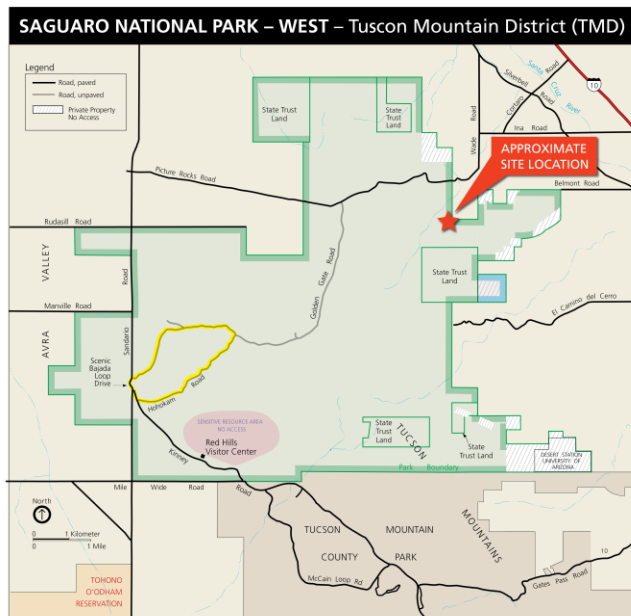
Saguaro National Park
Tucson, Arizona



OLD YUMA MINE AT SAGUARO NATIONAL PARK

The Old Yuma Mine is located in the Tucson Mountain District (TMD) of Saguaro National Park, approximately 9 miles northwest of Tucson, Arizona. Saguaro National Park covers 91,445 acres and consists of two districts Saguaro East (Rincon Mountain District/RMD) and Saguaro West (Tucson Mountain District/TMD). Beginning in the 1600s, settlers arrived at the Tucson basin. Starting in the 1900s, large-scale land clearing for homes, overgrazing of grasslands, and mining destroyed the habitat of many desert plants and animals. In an effort to preserve desert habitat, Saguaro National Monument was established in 1933 with lands transferred from the U.S. Forest Service Catalina National Forest. In 1961, President Kennedy signed a proclamation adding part of the Tucson Mountains to the monument. In 1994, Congress passed a law changing the name of the monument to Saguaro National Park.

The Old Yuma Mine Site (Site) consists of approximately 22 acres and is one of nearly 150 mines documented in TMD. The mine is approximately 300 feet deep and has horizontal mine workings at the 65-, 100-, 200-, and 300-foot levels.



A SITE HISTORY

The Old Yuma Mine operated from 1885 to approximately 1954 and produced lead, copper, silver, and gold. Steel-hardening agents were also produced from molybdenite, wulfenite, and vanadinite. The site changed ownership a number of times after 1954. In 1994, the site of the Old Yuma Mine was included in a boundary expansion authorized by Congress. The land transferred immediately from BLM to NPS management. NPS acquired the patented mining claim in 2001. Over 7,000 cubic yards of tailings (milling debris) remain at the Site, as a result of past mining operations. The Site includes a leach pad, shafts, mill remains, glory hole, headframe, and a waste rock dumping area. The mine area has been enclosed with a 3-strand barbed wire fence to restrict access and protect the public. Each mine shaft entry is also fenced.

ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS

In 2000, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was conducted at the Site to determine what environmental conditions or hazards might exist. The ESA identified the possible presence of contamination at the Old Yuma Mine Site based on evidence of apparent waste disposal practices, past mining activity, and leach pad remnants. The ESA recommended sampling and characterization of the tailings and leach pad to evaluate potential soil impacts at the Site, as well as the closure of mine shaft access points and proper disposal of solid waste debris.

A Phase II ESA Soil Sampling Investigation performed in 2001 included sampling and analysis for heavy metals, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), pesticides, and petroleum-related waste. Surface soil samples were collected from the mine tailings pile, leach pad, mill foundation area, headframe, glory hole area, solid waste pile, and other locations. These findings concluded that only heavy metals (including arsenic, lead, and zinc) were detected at elevated levels.

A more extensive investigation was conducted pursuant to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) in 2005. The purpose of this investigation, called a Preliminary Assessment/Site Inspection, (PA/SI), is to determine if a hazardous substance release requires additional investigation or response action. During the PA/SI, soil samples were collected, and the NPS concluded that additional work was warranted based on elevated levels of metals in surface soils and identification of potential migration pathways.

THE NEXT STEP

Community involvement is an important component of the CERCLA process. The public has the opportunity to be involved in reviewing and commenting on the Old Yuma Mine Site investigations and proposed cleanup documents. An Administrative Record File has been established and includes documents that form the basis for selection of response action at the Site. It is available for public review at the following two locations:

Saguaro National Park
3693 South Old Spanish Trail
Tucson, AZ 85730
Contact: Meg Weesner
Phone: (520) 733-5170
Mon.-Fri. 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

National Park Service
Intermountain Regional Office
Lakewood, CO 80228
Contact: Chris Reel
Phone: (303) 969-2643
Mon.-Fri. 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

In addition, the park has established a location for posting public notifications and information relating to the Site on its park planning website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/sagu>.

It is anticipated that an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) will be conducted for the site in 2010 and 2011. This EE/CA will fully characterize the nature and extent of contamination and comprehensively evaluate Site cleanup alternatives for effectiveness, implementability, and cost. The NPS will also prepare a formal community involvement plan for the Site that specifies the community involvement activities that NPS expects to implement. Once completed, the EE/CA (including any recommended cleanup) and supporting documents will be made available to the public in the Administrative Record File for review and comment prior to selection of a comprehensive Site cleanup.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions concerning the information contained in this fact sheet, please contact Meg Weesner, Saguaro National Park at (520) 733-5170 or meg_weesner@nps.gov, or Chris Reel, Intermountain Regional Office – Denver at (303) 969-2643 or christopher_reel@nps.gov.